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# Agri-News

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**AUGUST 11, 2000**

## **TENNESSEE FARMERS EXPECTING A MUCH BETTER YEAR**

Based on an August 1 crop yield survey conducted by the Tennessee Agricultural Statistics Service, the 2000 crop year is shaping up to be much better than the one in 1999 when a long summer drought hurt overall crop production. Ideal weather this Spring allowed farmers to plant crops on time and provided the young plants with adequate moisture. As a result, all of Tennessee's major row crops have consistently been rated in good-to-fair condition throughout the current crop year. The State has experienced a period of dry weather this summer, but Gene Danekas, State Statistician for Tennessee said there is one key difference between this year and 1999. "The crops this year have received rain when they needed it. We did experience some dry conditions during June and July which caused some problems, but unlike last year, scattered showers and thunderstorms have come at the right time and have kept the crops in relatively good condition." The August forecast, which is based on farmers' expectations of final yields as of the first of the month show the following: **Corn**, 108 bu per acre, 6 bushels above 1999 and the highest yield in the State since 1996; **Cotton**, 581 pounds per acre compared to 505 pounds in 1999; **Soybeans**, 30 bushels per acre, 12 bushels above last year; **Burley Tobacco**, 1,950 pounds per acre, the highest yield in Tennessee since 1994. Despite the good projections, Danekas noted that portions of Middle Tennessee missed the rain, "Looking at the entire State, we can see that Middle Tennessee farmers are forecasting lower overall yields than their counterparts in West Tennessee, due to drier conditions. However, most still believe the crops are in fairly good shape." Farmers throughout the Volunteer State are now hoping for continued rainfall throughout the summer and good harvesting conditions this Fall.

## **CORN YIELDS VARIABLE ACROSS THE STATE**

This year's corn crop in Tennessee looks to be better than the one produced a year ago. This is particularly true in West Tennessee, where the crop was planted early and received plenty of moisture during the critical pollination stage. For Middle Tennessee farmers, the story is slightly different. The majority of this corn was planted later in the Spring, with much of it pollinating during a very hot and dry period. As a result, yields have been adversely affected. East Tennessee producers report the corn crop in their region is in good condition. Corn yields are forecast at 108 bu per acre, resulting in 63.7 million bushels of total production, up nearly 10 percent from a year ago and the highest level in the State since 1996.

## **COTTON PRODUCTION UP SUBSTANTIALLY FROM A YEAR AGO**

Tennessee cotton growers are anticipating good overall crop yields for 2000. Most producers were able to get their crop planted by mid-May, and the crop has received rain when it needed it. Insect pressure has been fairly normal this year but thrips did cause some damage early and bollworms are now becoming a problem in some areas. The Boll Weevil Eradication program currently being conducted in the western part of the State will help reduce the amount of lint usually lost to this pest. The crop was shedding some fruit and squares near the end of July, due to dry conditions but recent rains have helped. Yields are forecast at 581 pounds per acre. If realized, total production of 720,000 bales, will be 21 percent more than was produced a year ago and the largest amount produced since 1995.

## **SOYBEAN YIELDS IN-LINE WITH STATE AVERAGE**

Tennessee's full season soybeans were planted on time and received adequate spring moisture. These early varieties are in mostly good condition and are currently blooming and setting pods. Double-crop beans, conversely, have struggled during the summer months. Dry soil conditions during June delayed some planting, while those that had been planted lay dormant or stopped growing due to the lack of moisture. As a result, some farmers were forced to replant. Recent rains have helped the crop recover and clear the wheat stubble. Despite the problems, growers are forecasting an overall yield of 30 bushels per acre. This is well above last year and is in line with both the five-year and ten-year State average. Total production is forecast at 34.8 million bushels, 62 percent more than was produced last year. Producers are now hoping for a late first frost in order for the double-crop beans to reach their full potential.

**(Over)**

BURLEY PRODUCTION DOWN DESPITE GOOD YIELDS

The State’s tobacco crop has held up considerably well during the hot and dry conditions this summer. Typical problems with black shank and blue mold have been reported but the dry weather seems to have kept these diseases in-check with only the lower leaves affected in many cases. Producers are now busy topping the crop and applying sucker control while a few have begun harvesting. Burley yields are forecast at 1,950 pounds per acre, 60 pounds more than in 1999. Total production, forecast at 87.8 million pounds, is 16 percent below last year’s level and would be the lowest production in the State since 1995. The drop in production is a direct result of the 45 percent cut in the quota which led to a 10,000 acre decrease in acreage. Tennessee’s dark-fired tobacco yields are forecast at 2,400 pounds for Type 22, Eastern Dark-Fired and 2,800 pounds for Type 23, Western Dark-Fired. Type 35, Dark Air-Cured is forecast at 2100 pounds per acre.

EXCELLENT YEAR FOR HARVESTING HAY IN TENNESSEE

It has been an excellent year for hay in Tennessee with producers’ reporting good yields. Some hay was lost in the Spring due to wet weather but producers more than made up for this lost output by cutting a record number of acres. Fear of another drought was the main reason for the increase in acreage. Many producers have cut their fields for a second time and some may try to get a third cutting this Fall. Hay yields in the State, excluding alfalfa, are forecast at 2.2 tons per acre. If realized, this will tie the State’s record yield.

FREEZE DAMAGE HURTS APPLE CROP

Late Spring freezes again this year caused considerable damage to Tennessee’s apple crop but the cold weather was not the only culprit affecting apple production. Last summer’s drought led to fewer and weaker fruit buds. This, combined with insect and disease pressures, has made it a difficult year for many producers. Production is forecast at 9.0 million pounds. If realized, this will be the lowest production in the State since 1990.

CROP FORECASTS: TENNESSEE AND UNITED STATES, AUGUST 1, 2000, WITH COMPARISONS

Crop	Unit	Harvested Acres		Yield Per Acre		Production	
		1999	Indicated 2000	1999	Indicated 2000	1999	Indicated 2000
Thousands                                      Number of Units                                      Thousands							
TENNESSEE							
Apples	lb.	---	---	---	---	9,500	9,000
Corn for grain	bu.	570	590	102	108	58,140	63,720
Cotton <sup>1</sup>	lb.	565	595	505	581	595	720
Hay, All (excluding Alfalfa)	ton	1,850	1,900	2.00	2.20	3,700	4,180
Peaches <sup>2</sup>	lb.	---	---	---	---	3,100	2,000
Soybeans	bu.	1,190	1,160	18	30	21,420	34,800
Tobacco, All	lb.	63.2	54.2	1,941	2,027	122,601	109,860
E. Dark-fired (22)	lb.	7.0	7.9	2,280	2,400	15,960	18,960
W. Dark-fired (23)	lb.	.57	.63	2,500	2,800	1,425	1,764
Burley (31)	lb.	55.0	45.0	1,890	1,950	103,950	87,750
One-sucker (35)	lb.	.60	.66	2,110	2,100	1,266	1,386
Winter Wheat	bu.	340	350	54.0	52.0	18,360	18,200
UNITED STATES							
Apples	lb.	---	---	---	---	10,579,600	10,677,100
Corn for grain	bu.	70,537	73,059	133.8	141.9	9,437,337	10,369,369
Cotton <sup>1</sup>	lb.	13,424.9	14,188.0	607	648	16,968.0	19,159.1
Hay, All (excluding Alfalfa)	ton	39,175	38,424	1.92	1.94	75,153	74,459
Peaches	lb.	---	---	---	---	2,525,400	2,677,100
Soybeans	bu.	72,476	73,474	36.5	40.7	2,642,908	2,988,669
Tobacco, All	lb.	647.16	493.74	1,997	2,169	1,292,692	1,070,765
E. Dark-fired (22)	lb.	10.75	11.90	2,304	2,484	24,773	29,560
W. Dark-fired (23)	lb.	4.07	4.43	2,612	3,100	10,630	13,734
Burley (31)	lb.	303.60	201.00	1,829	1,982	555,185	398,342
One-sucker (35)	lb.	3.45	3.66	2,325	2,387	8,021	8,736
Winter Wheat	bu.	35,572	35,401	47.8	45.0	1,699,989	1,594,321

<sup>1</sup> Production in 480-lb. net weight bales. U.S. production includes American-Pima cotton. <sup>2</sup> Estimate for current year carried forward from an earlier forecast.

**REMINDER:** All forecasts in this report are based on conditions about August 1 and do not reflect any possible weather affects since that time.

